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Bonifaz Calls For Investigation Into Potential Campaign Finance Violations By KillerCoke.Org

BOSTON - John Bonifaz, Democratic candidate for Secretary of State, issued the following statement today calling for an investigation into potential campaign finance violations by the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke:

"Today, I call upon the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) to launch an investigation into whether the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke is in compliance with Massachusetts campaign finance law.

"The New York-based Campaign to Stop Killer Coke is currently engaged in activity raising questions about the corporate law record of Deval Patrick, Democratic candidate for Governor. This activity appears to constitute express advocacy for the defeat of a particular candidate and, as such, would be subject to oversight by OCPF.

"As first revealed by David Kravitz at BlueMassGroup.com, the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke appears to be run by Corporate Campaign, Inc., a private consulting firm. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 55, Section 8 prohibits corporate expenditures 'for the purpose of aiding, promoting, or preventing the nomination or election of any person to public office' in the Commonwealth.

"If the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke is, in fact, a project of a for-profit business, then expenditures by the business for that project's express advocacy in the Massachusetts governor's race would run afoul of this law.

"Further, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 55, Section 18A requires that any group making an independent expenditure in a Massachusetts political campaign in excess of $100 during any calendar year 'for the purpose of promoting the election or defeat of any candidate' must file disclosure reports with the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF).

"Even if the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke is not connected with a for-profit business, the Campaign, if engaging in express advocacy, appears to be in violation of this statutory requirement as the Campaign has apparently failed to file any disclosure reports. Further, the Campaign, if engaging in express advocacy, has failed to register as a political committee subject to the standard reporting and disclosure requirements, including the requirements of revealing the sources of income for the activities in question.

"As Massachusetts Secretary of State, I will be vigilant in protecting the integrity of our electoral process. Irrespective of the questions raised by the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke, it is critical that we ensure full compliance with Massachusetts campaign finance law by any individual or group making expenditures for the purpose of supporting or defeating a candidate. Based on available evidence, a full investigation by OCPF is warranted in this matter."

The first candidate to officially declare his candidacy for Secretary of State, Bonifaz launched his campaign last December. He founded the National Voting Rights Institute in 1994 and for over a decade has been a powerful voice and dedicated leader working with people throughout Massachusetts and across the country to protect the right to vote, demand a full recount in Ohio, overhaul the nation's campaign finance system and broaden citizen participation in the democratic process.

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